

St. James the Less
Philadelphia - Penna.

-E.O. Nielsen-

Self-Study 1983



Church of St. James the Less
Hunting Park Ave. at Clearfield St.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JAMES THE LESS
REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL SELF-STUDY
1983

Preface

Diocesan procedures governing a parish's search for a new Rector require a parish self-study, in order to analyze and record information useful to the congregation in it's search, and to furnish information to prospective candidates for the position. The Church of St. James the Less was fortunate, through the kind consideration of the Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Right Reverend Lyman C. Ogilby, to secure the Reverend Father David A. Ousley as our Rector prior to the completion of this self-study. The Bishop desired, however, that the self-study be completed as it would be most useful to the Parish in "taking stock" of ourselves. In this we fully concur.

This report is based on parish records and on data obtained from a questionnaire sent to all communicants of the parish. The responses to the questions (submitted) were not as numerous as might be desired, but it is the belief of the Vestry that the majority of the **active** communicants responded. Accordingly the answers have been tabulated and used with the hope that our assumption is correct.

The Vestry of The Church of
St. James the Less
Diocese of Pennsylvania
October 9, 1983

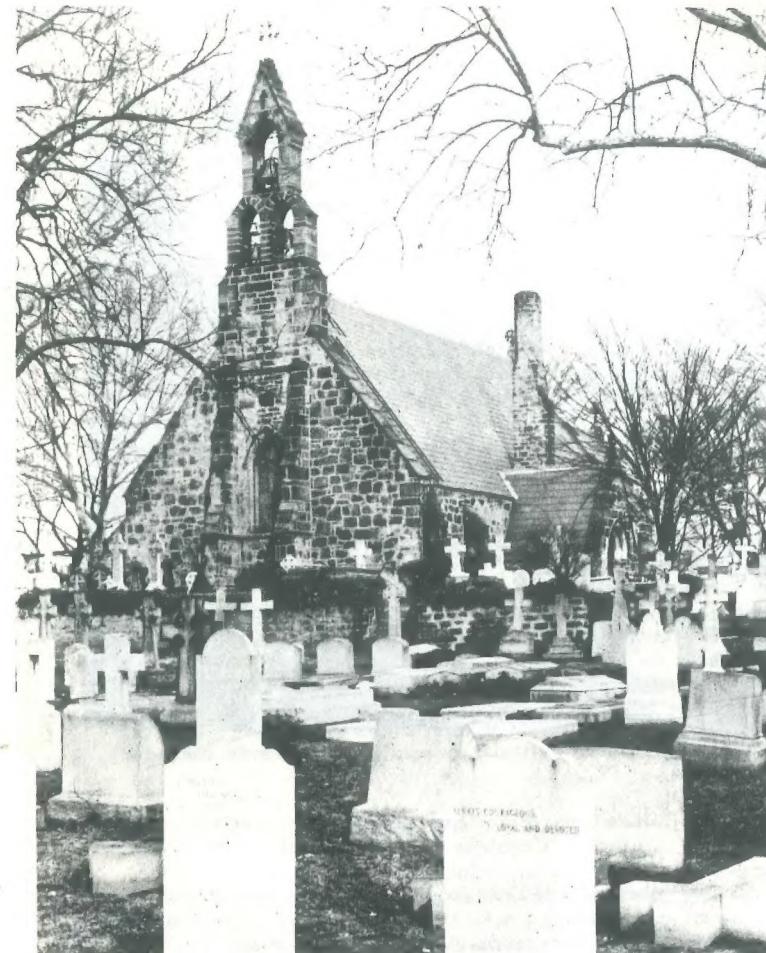
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. JAMES THE LESS

On the 30th of April, 1846, Robert Ralston and other interested persons met at Ralston's home, Mount Peace (now Mount Peace Cemetery) to discuss the building of a church in the area of North Penn Township near the village of Falls of Schuylkill. In March of 1846 Ralston had been visited by his friend Samuel Farmar Jarvis, a leader in the Episcopal Church in the United States, who had assisted in the founding of the General Theological Seminary in New York. Jarvis had traveled widely pursuing his studies in the history of the Church. While in England he became familiar with the Cambridge Camden Society, a group dedicated to the preservation of the Gothic Church in England and the building of the English country parish church in the New World.

As a result of Jarvis' visit, Ralston was inspired to seek the advice of the Cambridge Camden Society in the building of his contemplated church. Two members of the Society were Benjamin Webb and the Rev. John Mason Neale. Jarvis had asked his friends for plans which he might take to the United States. It was these plans for "the exact copy of a church of early English architecture ... for a small parish" that came to the United States and were used in the construction of Saint James the Less.

The name of St. James the Less was chosen in respect for the greater church of St. James, 22nd and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, of which Mr. Ralston and others of his group were members. In July 1846 the lot on which the present church stands was acquired from the Laurel Hill Cemetery Company. At Mr. Ralston's request, Mr. Jarvis sent the plans in his possession, which he believed to be the plans of Holy Trinity, Roehampton, built in 1841-42. It was later determined that they were not the plans of Holy Trinity, Roehampton, but were adapted from St. Michael's Church, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire, England, a truly ancient church, built circa 1230.

From the meeting held April 30th, 1846 at which a Vestry was elected and a temporary Rector chosen, work progressed. The lot was acquired in July, 1846. In September, 1846, a corporation entitled "The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of the Church of St. James the Less" was registered under the laws of Pennsylvania. In October, the estimate for the construction of the church was approved and contracts let, and on October 28th the cornerstone was laid by the Diocesan, the Rt. Rev. Alonzo Potter, D.D. Mr. Ralston insisted that the plans be accurately followed and resisted any attempts to change them. On the 26th of May, 1850, the church was consecrated by Bishop. The purpose of the Ecclesiological Society (Cambridge Camden Society) in providing the New World with a truly Gothic Church had been fulfilled and Mr. Ralston's dream had become a reality.



Today St. James the Less remains committed to Mr. Robert Ralston's dream and is truly an American Expression of the Oxford Tractarian Movement.

STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES

The church remains essentially unchanged from the original church as consecrated in 1850. The details of changes and additions to the original structure have been admirably set forth by Mr. Paul W. Kayser, a present member of the Vestry, in his excellent and authoritative "A Brief History and Guide to the Church of Saint James the Less" published in February, 1983. As Mr. Kayser states in his history, "this tiny Gothic structure [St. James the Less] has been maintained by Vestries devoted to thoughtful and appreciative care of the fabric of the building and the grounds. They have been steadfast in the performance of their sacred trust, the maintenance of a church that embodies the essence of the medieval Catholic Church."

The Lych Gate was built in 1886. The heavy crossed chains were installed so that the grounds could be closed to carriages.

In the southwest corner of the church yard is situated the Wanamaker Memorial Tower, built in 1909 by Mr. Rodman Wanamaker in memory of his brother Thomas. The tower is 50', three stories high, built of American granite. Fifteen chimes, weighing 26,000 pounds, imported from Europe, are hung in the tower. In 1922, Mr. Wanamaker added a set of electrically operated chimes which strike the hour and quarter hours. On August 23, 1920, Mrs. Mary Brown Wanamaker, wife of the merchant, was interred in the mausoleum under the tower, and on December 14, 1922, John Wanamaker was placed beside his wife and son, Thomas.

The Parish House was given by Mrs. H. Wilson Catherwood in honor of her daughter, Caroline Reynolds Tucker, the cornerstone being laid on August 6, 1916 and the dedication service was held on December 15, 1917. In 1972 a major renovation was undertaken, and the building was adapted for use as a day care facility. It was operated as such until this past summer. The building has ample facilities for parish activities.

At the same time that the Parish House was being built, the ample Rectory was erected by the Vestry from Parish Funds.

The Sexton's house was built in 1874 and enlarged in 1901.



SAINT JAMES TODAY

A poll was taken of the parish in the summer of 1983. Questionnaires were mailed to all voting members of the parish. Before listing the detailed results, it is worth summarizing some of the general trends that emerge.

First, it is the worship of Almighty God that lies at the center of the life of Saint James the Less. Virtually all the respondents felt that the Eucharist is the act of Christian worship. The parish is uniquely blessed with a building suited to worship emphasizing the transcendence of God. This is a source of great pride as well as spiritual strength.

Along with this, the congregation is heartily committed to its present, traditional form of worship. Virtually all of those responding to the question felt that the 1928 Book of Common Prayer (in its Missal form at the Mass) should be used at all services at Saint James. One parishioner wrote, "I believe in the exclusive use of the 1928 Prayer Book for Saint James the Less. It suits our heritage in this parish. We should, however, keep an informed position concerning the

changes that have come to the Episcopal Church . . . The changes do not supplant what we have and desire to keep, but in understanding them, we crystallize our own beliefs and their traditional value to us." There appears to be no real disagreement with this position within the parish.

While Saint James was once the parish church of greater East Falls, it is no longer. Nearly half of those responding indicated that they live more than ten miles from the Church. This means two things. First, the usual sort of parish activities -- guilds and societies and frequent church suppers and so forth -- are difficult here. People are too far away to be able to get here frequently during the week. In addition, a number of people are dependent on public transportation -- which is often a major obstacle, especially on Sunday morning. Second, the people who come to Saint James do so because they want to. It requires some effort. They typically pass a number of other Episcopal Churches on their way. Thus they have a higher than average level of commitment to the parish.

Fourth, a significant number of people are life-long parishioners at Saint James the Less. Even those who have moved from East Falls remain loyal to the parish. In addition, there are those in the parish who have come seeking traditional worship, doctrine and moral teaching. They are willing to come great distances to worship as they can at Saint James. This group comes to Saint James not to flee the world, but because they find their worship significantly impoverished (in some cases impossible) in their former parishes. The impulse which has brought them to Saint James is not a knee-jerk rejection of anything new, but the positive and constructive desire to worship God with as much of their being as is humanly possible.

Fifth, the congregation is predominantly an older one. Nearly half the respondents admitted to being over 65. This is a source of concern for a number of people: there is a desire to see more young people in the congregation. On the other hand, it is also a source of strength for the congregation, in the wisdom and dedication of the older age group. Many of them have been parishioners from their youth. Others have sought out Saint James for its traditional teachings and worship after many years at another parish. For both groups, there is deep commitment to Saint James.

Sixth, there is interest in having more parish activities, beyond the Sunday worship. With the greater availability of the Parish House, no doubt more of this will develop.

Seventh, while there is a genuine concern for the neighborhood around the church, the congregation generally feels that our primary focus is on worship. Redemption and not social change is at the center of what we are about here. At the same time, there is concern, and a willingness to support the activities that go on in the community. Our support of

the Learning Center was one such instance; the Neighborhood Association meets monthly in the Parish House. Our present relationship with the neighborhood is satisfactory.

Eighth, Saint James is and wishes to be an Episcopal parish. While there is dissatisfaction with much of what goes on in the Episcopal Church, there is also a commitment to Anglicanism as our heritage and the means by which we have received the redemption of Jesus Christ. "I hope we will continue with the 1928 Prayer Book, and be in good standing with the Diocese of Pennsylvania" was a frequent comment.

It is a fine expression of the level of commitment at Saint James that a high percentage of the parish tithes. This is evidence of a deep spiritual commitment, expressed in Sunday worship, in daily prayers and study, and in percentage giving to the Church. Saint James' congregation is by no means rich. But they are committed materially as well as spiritually.

Finally, there is the almost inevitable interest in growth in numbers. Nearly two thirds of the respondents agreed that evangelism is a lay responsibility. At Saint James, this means more than anything else being ready to invite people to church who find themselves unable to worship elsewhere. There are many around. The Episcopal Church has lost over a million members in the last fifteen years. Many remain desirous of worshipping in a parish church. It is such people that will be drawn to Saint James the Less. People in need of redemption. People seeking biblical teaching. People who take religion seriously. People who want to worship God in spirit and in truth.

----- PARISH STATISTICAL DATA

On July 1, 1983 the questionnaire was mailed to the eighty-six (86) qualified voting members of St. James the Less as part of this self-study. Usable responses were submitted by thirty-four (34) persons which represent only 40% of the parish. However, a careful study of the responses, and of the parish membership, indicated that most of the active members have responded. Thus the responses can be used as a "parish response". The percentages shown as answers are percentages of the responses.

By marital status 67% indicated that they were married, 18% single, 15% widowed and one divorced. In age, 45% are over 65 years of age, 42% over 40 years and 3% under 35 years.

With respect to education -- 18% have graduate degrees, 12% had college degrees and 52% had finished high school.

39% are retired, 30% are employed, 18% listed "homemakers", and 3% are unemployed.

39% live within 5 miles of the church, 9% within a 5 to 10 mile distance, 39% within 10 to 20 miles and 6% between 20 and 50 miles.

21% have been members of St. James the Less less than 5 years, 27% between 5 to 10 years, 12% between 10 and 20 years, 24% between 20 and 60 years and 12% more than 60 years.

33% indicated that they had an income of less than ten thousand dollars, 18% had an income between ten and twenty-five thousand, and 30% more than twenty-five thousand per year.

On tithing -- 30% indicated that they tithe, 36% do not tithe and 34% did not answer this question.

In attendance at Sunday Mass -- 42% indicated attendance at 8 AM Mass (Low) and 45% at 10 AM Mass (Sung or High). 12% said they attend daily Mass, 73% weekly Mass and 9% confessed to yearly attendance.

In daily life -- 94% participated in daily prayer, 24% in daily Bible reading and 45% in reading of religious books.

50% of those responding said they frequently participated in parish activity, 12% participated only rarely and 9% never.

On the question of Lay Ministry -- 94% believe that Christian Ministry is the responsibility of the laity as well as the clergy.

61% agree that evangelism is the responsibility of the laity.

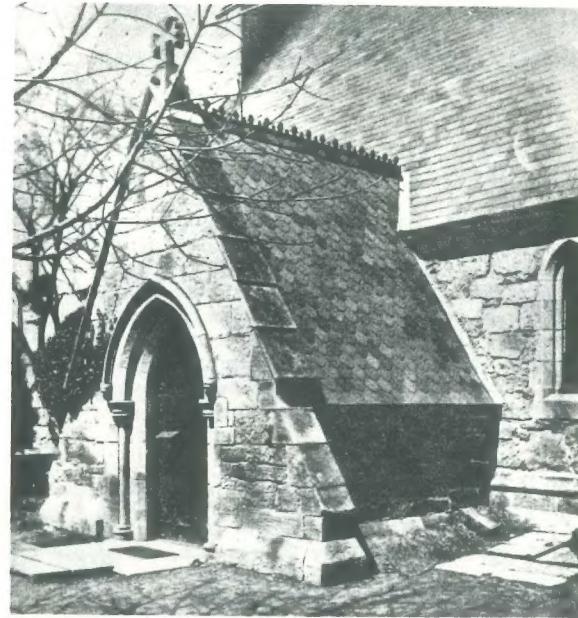
64% feel that regular participation in parish activities is an important part of parish life.

73% consider that daily activities of all kinds should be a form of Christian Ministry.

50% consider evangelism and witness are an important part of the lay ministry.

67% believe that support of organized Christian Missions is important.

55% believe that inter-parish and diocesan activities by clergy and laity are important.



Under the heading of liturgy and public worship the answers were:

94% believe that celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the most important part of public worship.

94% believe that "Liturgy" is an important part of public worship.

88% believe that music is an important part of public worship.

91% believe that the use of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer (Missal) is mandatory for all services at St. James the Less.

85% believe that public prayer is important.

75% believe that sermons are an important part of worship.

On Social Responsibility and Community Relations:

55% believe that St. James the Less has a responsibility to the surrounding community.

Only 9% feel that the Vestry of St. James the Less should take public positions on social issues.

Only 13% believe that St. James the Less should become actively involved in efforts to respond to community and social problems.

The final and most important question was, "What are the goals that St. James the Less should have?"

The dominant thought that was evident in most answers was the desire that St. James the Less could continue in our present traditional worship. In this connection it is good that we should re-examine and renew again our "Declaration of Principles" quoted on the back cover. This declaration was adopted unanimously at the Annual Parish Meeting on May 5th, 1974, and re-affirmed unanimously at the Annual Parish Meeting on May 3rd, 1981. It is published on the back of every service leaflet, setting forth the order of worship and notices for that day of worship.

One parishioner summed up the goals: "To continue our present traditional Anglo-Catholic Missal type of worship at St. James the Less, within the framework of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and the Episcopal Church. By doing this, we should offer a rallying point for continuing Episcopalianos of Anglo-Catholic Tradition. It does not mean leaving the Episcopal Church and going to the ACC, nor does it mean being too vocal about adherence to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. It does mean quiet determination to not give in to compliance with the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, mainly because of changes in substance of basic beliefs rather than just alteration of the language of the Liturgy; although the language of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer is universally considered by scholars and 'common folk' alike to be superior and more beautiful than the language of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer."

STATISTICAL DATA FROM LATEST PAROCHIAL REPORT

For the Calendar Year 1982

Adjusted to cover period from 12/31/75 (date of last Parochial Report) to 12/31/82.

Congregation

Number of Families	17
Individuals not included in families	52
Total number of Households	69

Baptized Members

All Baptized persons in Congregation	98
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Communicants in Good Standing

Last Report-12/31/75	164
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Lost by death

Transferred	12
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Lost since last report	6
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Removed from active list	50
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Total losses	10
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Presently in good standing	78
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Holy Communion -- Number of Services

Sunday	87
Weekday	197
Private	32

All Other Sacraments and Services

Number of Services, except Marriages & Burials	28
Marriages	4
Burials	8

Additional Information

Total Attendance	
1st Sunday in Lent	68
Easter Sunday	99
Trinity Sunday	62
First Sunday in Advent	70
Total Attendance	
Mon.-Sat.(average)	15

FINANCIAL DATA FROM PAROCHIAL REPORT
Calendar Year 1982

REVENUES	EXPENDITURES
For General Purpose	
Plate Offerings \$953.	Church Program \$1000.
Pledge Payments 26,340.	Outside Parish
Investment & Endowment	
Income (net) 41,988.	Parish Purposes
	Operating Expense 77,389.
TOTAL \$87,560.	Major Improvements
	to Property 9,947.
	TOTAL \$87,336.
For Special Purposes	TOTAL EXPEND. \$88,336.
Special Offerings 7,687.	
	Non-Expense Disbursements
TOTAL \$7,687.	Payroll Taxes Payable
TOTAL REVENUES \$95,247.	(Cum. Total) 5,941.
GROSS RECEIPTS \$95,247.	Repayment of Loans 685.
Balance on hand-1/82 \$24,812.	TOTAL \$6,626.
	GROSS DISBURSEMENTS
	\$94,962.
	Balance on hand-
	12/31/82 \$25,097.
PROOF TOTAL \$120,059.	PROOF TOTAL \$120,059.

Declaration of Principles

We, the Rector, Wardens, Vestry and parishioners of the Church of Saint James the Less, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the 3rd day of May in the year of our Lord 1981, do accept, witness, and proclaim our Declaration of Principles as originally set forth on the 5th day of May 1974; and do make it known to all as our affirmation of and witness to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

These we do affirm:

I, The Authority of Holy Scripture as the Word of God, summarized in the creeds, taught by the Fathers, and defined in the General Councils of the Church.

II, The Catholic Creeds as binding every member of the Church to a specific, personal conviction and commitment.

III, The Holy Sacraments as the means of Grace through which Christ is known and present, and especially:

Holy Baptism with water in the name of the Trinity, and Confirmation by a Bishop in the Apostolic line as the seal of the Holy Spirit in completion of Baptism as the total pattern of the Christian tradition.

The Holy Eucharist validly celebrated by a Bishop of the Apostolic line or a Priest ordained by such a Bishop, and

The Holy Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, bestowed upon men according to the universal practice of The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and as intended by the *Book of Common Prayer*.

IV, The Integrity of the Episcopate in its sacramental functions and as evangelist and guardian of the Church's faith and moral teaching.

V, The *Book of Common Prayer* and the administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, not only as a common liturgy, but as a standard of doctrine and a bond of fellowship, allowing prudent revision and diverse forms and usages, provided that the substance of the Faith be kept entire.

Nor will we seek to abandon or circumvent any of the above Principles, lest we fall into breach of Communion or schism intolerable to the faithful body of the Church.

We hold these principles, as did those who went before us, as binding beyond compromise those ordained as its stewards and trustees for the common and equal benefit of all.

Obedient to these principles, we pledge ourselves to the perpetuation of the Holy Catholic Church and do pray the witness and support of the faithful throughout the world.